THE

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DURING THE PRESENT BLOODY CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA.

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Reflections on the preſent conſpiracy of the King and Parliament of Britain againſt the *Americans*.

TAXES impoſed without the conſent of the people, or their repreſentatives, who are ſo circumſtanced, that they cannot tax their conſtituents, without taxing themſelves, breaks down every barrier of liberty. Remove this conſtitutional check, and the people are no longer a controul upon the Houſe of Commons, nor they upon the miniſter. Empire follows the balance of property and confers ſovereign power to the poſſeſſor, though he may not have more wiſdom, honour, humanity, or juſtice, than that malignant influence which ſecretly prevails in the cloſet, debauches the ſenate and ſeems to be traiterouſly gnawing out the vital principles of the conſtitution. He who holds the national purſe, holds life, liberty, and every thing valuable to ſociety, at his abſolute diſpoſal. Every act of the preſent adminiſtration verifies

riſies the poſition. Hence it is we behold, with ſecret indignation, an addreſſing, obſequious parliament, and a petitioning, diſcontented, inſulted people, calling loud for impeachments; a penſionary commons, voting ſupplies with an unconfined liberality, and the nation demanding account. The wiſe and virtuous pining in obſcurity, or ſecretly retiring from court, while honours. penſions, and the moſt lucrative employments, the rewards of great and eminent ſervice, are conferred upon ſplendid villians, for the meaneſt proſtitutions. The firſt ſervant of the ſtate, inſulting the religion of his country, with impunity, within thoſe conſecrated walls, where one would have immagined, common decency, in the abſence of religion, and virtue, would forever held her in legal reverence.

The moſt auguſt judicature of the nation, deaf to all reaſon and argument, obſtinately perſiſting in a ſyſtem of violence, with the evidence of repeated experience, has demonſtrated to be fatal to commerce; ſubverſive of natural juſtice; the cleareſt principles of law; derogratory to its own honour, incongrous with the uſage of all deliberate and judicial aſſemblies; and finally, pregnant with the moſt unnatural ſcenes of bloodſhed, murder and devaſtation. If ſuch are the melancholly effects of an inordinate attachment to gain, in a luxurious diſſipated age, can we wonder that the firſt ſtep, always taken by artful miniſters, is to command, without controul, the property of the ſubject, when the people are to be deprived of their freedom, and independency? The unhappy Charles knew the weight of the argument; but happily for this nation, his virtuous parliament felt its full force; and therefore in a conteſt for a few ſhillings, this iſland was made to run down with the beſt and richeſt blood of the nation.

Whoever, diſpaſſionately conſiders, the nature of the controverſy, between adminiſtration and the colonies, will find it very nearly reſembles that which was maintained between the Stuart race, and the people of Great Britain. The ſame arguments may, with equal proprety, be urged in favour of the coloniſts, which were made uſe of by the patriots of thoſe times. There is, I confeſs, ſome difference in the mode, by which Tyranny is now ſupported, from what it was at that period. In that virtuous age, Parliament was the controuling

power

power for the people, the redreſſer of grievances, and guardian of the the public welfare. But in theſe unnatural times of degeneracy, parliament is become the violent inſtrument, under the baneful influence of a flattering minion, by which the very throne is undermined, and a brave and loyal people perſecuted with the moſt relentleſs cruelty.

Fully ſenſible that there would be no end of impoſitions and oppreſſions, if once they ſhould ſubmit to the reaſonable claims of Britain. after ſolemn deliberation, they are reduced to the fatal neceſſity of an appeal to heaven, and the juſtice of their cauſe, In imitation of their illuſtrious progenitors, they are determined to undergo every ſpecies of miſery! Nay, all the horrors of the laſt century, rather then abandon their own native rights, or ſervillely bend their necks to the yoke of domeſtic tyranny! It is equal to them, whether they are enſlaved by a few, or the many; by the prerogative of the crown, the falſe towering dignity of Parliament, or the head-long ſavage reſentment, and blind-fold ambition, of an unfeeling adminiſtration.

By what tenure do the coloniſts hold their liberties; when, after encountering, almoſt inſuperable hardſhips, toils, and difficultles, the the fruits of their induſtry is to be torn from them by the lords and commons of Britain, who have no property in America, to ſerve as a a controul upon their actions? Men who have ſolemnly profeſſed they will be reſtricted by no limitations, and who by their remote diſtance, muſt be incompetent judges of their abilities, or the ways and means taxes can be impoſed, leaſt burthenſome to them: men, who are under an undue bias, from motives of popularity and intereſt in their reſpective diſtricts, to throw an unequal proportion of the national burthens, upon the ſhoulders of the coloniſts, to eaſe themſelves, and the eſtates of the gentry of this kingdom.

Why does the law require legal qualifications for members to ſit in the Britiſh houſe of Commons? was it not wiſely judged a meaſure abſolutely neceſſary, for every member to have three hundred pounds per year for a Borough, and five for a county, as a ſecurity for the people againſt unlimited taxation? Have the coloniſts this ſecurity? Does on American eſtate give this qualification? Why do the Commons

mons ſo pertinaciouſly inſiſt upon the excluſive privileges of framing money bills, and granting annual ſupplies to ſupport the prince, the army, and navy eſtabliſhments? let the people of Great Britain give up this controul upon their repreſentatives, and they immediately become abſolute: let the commons relinquiſh this right, and they ceaſe to have an exiſtence. The will of the Prince becomes the law of land, and the army paid with the peoples money, becomes the executioner of the arbitrary mandates of the miniſter.

But ſay, the advocates for the Britiſh ſupremacy, are there not millions in Great Britain, who have no imediate ſhare in ſending repreſentatives to parliament? do not the towns of Birmingham Sheffield, and Mancheſter, ſtock-holders, and copyholders, come under this deſcription? But is not this reaſoning from a defect in the conſtitution of Great Britain? how happens it thoſe towns are not repreſented? Had they exiſted when writs was firſt iſſued, to call members to Parliament, would they have been neglected? Do not ſtock holders and copyholders, vote frequently as freeholders, citizens and freemen? They are not parallel caſes, for the following obvious unanſwerabie, reaſons.

I. The Commons of Britain are choſen from a claſs of men, to whom the rights of thoſe towns, are as dear as thoſe other towns, which have a ſhare in the election of members.

II. There is, from the nature of things, an inevitable and inſeparable reciprocation of intereſt, between all the people of Great Britain, whither electors, non-electors, or repreſentatives.

III. The laws know no difference between the electors, non-electors, or the elected: they are all equally obnoxious to the ſame inconveniencies, contributors to the ſame taxes: therefore ſtock-holders, copy-holders and the inhabitants of thoſe towns, having no taxes levied upon them, but what equally bind the Lords and Commons of Great Britain, are in no worſe condition than thoſe electors, who have actually and perſonally a right of repreſentation.

If

If ſome advocate for the Britiſh Supremacy, laying aſide the falacious ſubterfuges of ſophiſtry and deceit, will point out to my conviction, how the colonies, circumſtanced as they are, ſtand in the ſame predicament with thoſe towns, I will give up the controverſy, and confeſs, the complaitants have no right to accuſe Britain of tyranny and injuſtice. The claim of virtual repreſentation is manifeſtly defective. It does not provide for the ſafety of the coloniſts. It diſcovers an overweening attachment to our own intereſt; and being partial, tends to work that diſunion we all dread, as ruinous to the whole empire. The litigents on both ſides ſeem to be inſenſible, that the conſtitutional principles they appeal to, were eſtabliſhed before the colonies were diſcovered; whereas the truth is, the empire, long after the conſtitution was formed, acquired a new adventitious ſtate; and the queſtion therefore is, not what the conſtitution was, or is; but what, preſent circumſtances conſidered, it ought to be? Britain having made a vaſt acceſſion to her dominions, by diſcovery, by conqueſt, and by ceſſion, the diſputants, inſtead of idly ſpending their time in collecting arguments, all changeable with a *non ſequitur*, ſhould have pointed to meaſures, conducive to the common weal of both countries, becauſe to that the conſtitution (be it what it will) ought to bend, and ſooner or later, will bend, unleſs it is the deſign of heaven to forſake the Britiſh councils, and infatuate and deſtroy us as a nation.

Can the lives, or the religion of the coloniſts be ſecure, when a military force is quartered upon them, without the controul of law to bleed them into obedience? Call ſuch a conſtitution what you will, it is the ſword that governs. Are they not equally entitled to welfare and happineſs, ſecurity in their perſons and properties, freedom in their governments, with the people of Great Britain? Can we attempt to diſpoſſeſs them of theſe things, upon any pretence whatever? The very idea is inſupportable to every true Britain, and cannot be viewed, even in contemplation, without horror and deteſtation! Was not an attempt to take away the property of the ſubject, without his conſent, a juſt foundation for that reſiſtance which brought the firſt Charles and his miniſters to the block, and drove James the ſecond an exile into France, where he at laſt died in diſgrace, a terrible monument of the vengeance of God upon arbitrary princes?

The

The regulations which have been made in the different departments of our legislative and executive government, respecting the colonies, dispassionately considered, savour more of the inquisition than the common law of England, of the constitution of a free state.

To deprive the subject of the inettimable trial by jury---change the constitution of government---violate charters---abolish the sacred previlege of habeas corpus---proscribe a large and capital city---starve the innocent, and under the colour of justice, sport with their calamities---impose taxes without consent, and compel obedience by new, unconstitutional tribunals---"excite commotions and then "scourge for being excited" by a standing army raised without their consent, and paid with their money---exempt murderers from the hands of justice---drag their venerable patriots the principle pillars of their liberties, whom they now behold with an eye of gratitude and affection to be tried at an unequal bar, three thousand miles distance, where, without witnesses and friends, they have not the least chance of acquittal, or even the miserable consolation of beholding, in the gloomy hour of death, that they fell victims upon the alter of liberty bewailed and lamented by their countrymen.

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